

CONFIDENTIALREPORT OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL
WORKING GROUP ON DISARMAMENTDelegation Recommendation.

The Interdepartmental Working Group on Disarmament has considered the recommendations of the U.S. Delegation at the Geneva Conference on Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests that:

1) The U.S. abandon its requirement that lack of progress in disarmament constitute specific grounds for termination of the agreement on nuclear test discontinuance, and that we adopt the position that continuation of the suspension should be dependent only upon satisfactory installation and operation of the control system.

2) An initial period of two or three years be established during which no withdrawal would be authorized.

These recommendations, if adopted, would change Presidential policy of August 22. However, neither of these recommendations would change the link with effective international controls or the provision that the treaty obligation not to conduct weapons tests would be suspended in the event of violation of the treaty or obstruction of the carrying out of its provisions.

Disarmament Link.

The Working Group has identified the following arguments supporting the Delegation's recommendation with respect to abandoning the link to disarmament:

(a) The USSR has been able successfully to evade discussion of the details of control by attacking our position on the link to disarmament and stating that it is pointless to set up a control system to police an obligation which could be terminated at any time by the unilateral application of arms and essentially subjective criteria. If the USSR should choose to make this issue a sticking point, the West would probably leave the stage for failure of the talks without ever having been able to demonstrate whether or not the Soviet Union was prepared to accept effective controls.

(b) The primary disarmament objective in the U.S. in the present negotiations is to achieve agreement on such effective international control machinery. If this agreement can be achieved, we will probably have succeeded in removing one of the major past obstacles to disarmament progress. We should not let this real relationship be

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observed by insistence on a provision which will probably have little meaning in practice.

(c) A primary purpose of the disarmament link is to make it easier for us to withdraw should it determine its security position made this necessary. As the Delegation has pointed out, however, with "A) The statements on the progress regarding progress on disarmament; B) the provisions for suspending the agreement in case of violation or obstruction; C) firm provisions for the establishment and operation of the control system; D) tight provisions for phasing in of the control system and periodic review to determine satisfactory installation and operation according to agreed standards and E) retention of the U.S. unilateral right to make such determination, there would be adequate provision for termination should the U.S. at any time determine such action to be in our interest." Accordingly, we should not incur the burden of defending a position which does not appear to be necessary.

(d) We have a serious difference with the U.K. on this issue. Abandonment of the link to disarmament would allow us to close ranks with the British and to preclude Soviet exploitation of this divergence in position. Acceptance of the British suggestion that the link be dropped will probably strengthen British support for the clear and explicit link to a satisfactory control system which the U.S. is seeking.

The Working Group has noted the following arguments against accepting the Delegation's recommendations:

(a) Removal of the link to disarmament would by no means lead to a quick and successful conclusion of the negotiations since there are numerous other features of our position which will be objectionable to the Soviet Union.

(b) Abandonment of the link may give the Soviet Union the impression that if they stand firm, we will make important shifts in our position.

(c) The Soviet unwillingness to deal with controls has been clearly demonstrated in negotiations to date and the public position of both sides is already clear.

(d) Abandonment of an explicit link to disarmament progress would reduce U.S. flexibility in electing to withdraw from the treaty if national security considerations argued in favor of withdrawal even if the control system were working satisfactorily.

Delegation.

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Duration.

With respect to the second U.S. Delegation recommendation, the Working Group has noted that at a meeting of the principals on November 16 there was a consensus that the present formula that termination would be contingent on annual finding of progress could be replaced by a formula providing for discontinuance at any time if the control provision were not being carried out or were being violated.

The following arguments were advanced supporting the Delegation's recommendation that a period of two to three years be adopted during which the parties could not withdraw from the treaty.

(a) A period of shorter than two to three years would not be sufficient to allow any real control system to be set up. The contemplated provision regarding suspension of the treaty in the event of obstruction would be sufficient to protect the U.S. position during this interim period.

(b) Not to mention an initial period would leave us vulnerable to Soviet charges that we were proposing a treaty which could be terminated at any time after it went into force and even before any real chance had been provided to make a start on the installation of a control system.

(c) Our public position would be improved by the use of a two to three year period in view of its similarity to the Soviet position of 1957 and early 1958.

The Working Group has identified the following considerations which argue against acceptance of the Delegation's second recommendations:

(a) If indefinite continuation of the treaty were to be dependent solely upon satisfactory installation and operation of the control system, it is unnecessary to specify a two to three year period and it would be sufficient to say that the treaty would remain in force as long as the control system was operating satisfactorily.

(b) If ratification procedures are unduly protracted and there is a substantive interval of time before the treaty comes into force, the U.S. could find itself unable to test for a longer period than would be desirable.

Related Problems.

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Related Problems.

If the U.S. Delegation's recommendations are accepted, a number of subsidiary problems must be considered, i.e.:

- 1) Whether this policy shift should be disclosed in the negotiations before Christmas recess.
- 2) Whether this policy change should be communicated to the KAC for information or for discussion. This change would probably be supported by all members except France.
- 3) Whether any public announcement in the change in position should be made.

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